

In re divisional patent application of 09/802,986 filed on March 12, 2001

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

Claims 1-8. (Canceled)

Claim 9. (Original) An optical communication system comprising:

- a first optical fiber connected to a first station;
- a second optical fiber connected to a second station;
- a third optical fiber connected to a third station; and
- a light branching apparatus, which comprises:

an optical splitter which splits an optical signal for a plurality of channels on said first optical fiber from said first station into at least a first optical channel signal on a first channel of said second optical fiber and a plurality of second optical channel signals on a plurality of second channels of said third optical fiber; and

a first wavelength dispersion compensator which is provided for said first channel and compensates wavelength dispersion of said first optical channel signal due to said optical splitter.

Claim 10. (Original) The optical communication system according to claim 9, further comprising:

a second wavelength dispersion compensator which is provided for said plurality of second channels and compensates wavelength dispersion of said plurality of second optical channel signals due to said optical splitter.

Claim 11. (Original) The optical communication system according to claim 10, wherein said

first wavelength dispersion compensator compensates wavelength dispersion of said first optical channel signal due to said second optical fiber, in addition to said wavelength dispersion of said first optical channel signal due to said optical splitter.

Claim 12. (Original) The optical communication system according to claim 11, wherein said first wavelength dispersion compensator compensates said wavelength dispersion of said first optical channel signal due to said second optical fiber by difference in length between said second optical fiber and said third optical fiber on which said first optical channel signal is selectively propagated.

Claim 13. (Original) The optical communication system according to claim 12, further comprising:

an optical switch which switches a channel from one of said plurality of second channels to said first channel.

Claim 14. (Currently Amended) The optical communication system according to claim 9, further comprising:

~~said third~~ another wavelength dispersion compensator which is provided for said first channel and compensates wavelength dispersion of said first optical channel signal due to said second optical fiber.

Claim 15. (Currently Amended) The optical communication system according to claim 9, further comprising:

~~said fourth~~ another wavelength dispersion compensator which is provided for a third channel of said second optical fiber and compensates wavelength dispersion of a third optical

channel signal inputted to said light branching apparatus due to said second optical fiber.

Claim 16. (Original) The optical communication system according to claim 9, wherein said plurality of optical channel signals are compensated in units of channels, and said first wavelength dispersion compensator includes at least a first wavelength dispersion compensating element for the channel of said first optical channel signal.

Claims 17-19. (Canceled)